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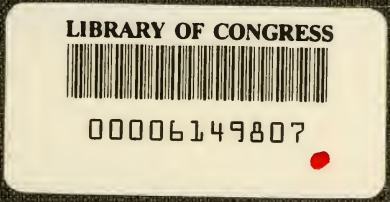

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A Discourse,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO A GRATEFUL PEOPLE

In Memory of the Worth

OF

OUR LAMENTED CHIEF MAGISTRATE,

Abraham Lincoln,

DELIVERED APRIL 21st, 1865,

BY

Rev. Abraham Grater.

Lincoliana

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A Eulogy

ON THE

LIFE AND DEATH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"*Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and the whole nation perish not.*"
John XI., part of the 49. and 50. v.

The disciples of Jesus could not at first realize that it was better for them that the Saviour should be crucified by his enemies; so the friends of Abraham Lincoln, have as yet not understood that it was better that he should lose his life at the hands of his murderous enemies. We have realized what Christ told his disciples shortly before his suffering:—"Ye shall weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

While thousands are now weeping and mourning on account of the loss of our honored chief magistrate, Secessionists and blackhearted traitors are secretly exulting over his death. The Christian, in considering the sentiments of the text, knows full well that it is better for him to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, than that he had never died. The death of our lamented President may be viewed similarly in many respects as the Saviour of his people.

The Saviour as the head of the Church upon earth, came to destroy the power of the devil, and to set up the kingdom of God; Abraham Lincoln, as the head of this nation, was ordained in the Providence of God, to stay the tide of rebellion and to restore the Union.

The Saviour and his Apostles were ever contending with the powers of darkness and sin; by the aid of the sword of the spirit and the word of God they gained the victory. Abraham Lincoln and the brave patriots of our nation, with the sword and the help of God, conquered the rebels. Christ fell a victim to his malefactors, poured out his blood, and gave himself a sacrifice to redeem the whole human family. On the same day of the year, in chronological order that Christ was crucified, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, and poured out his blood, and gave his life for the nation and the freedom of the oppressed blacks.

When Christ on earth triumphed over his enemies, his disciples sang praises and shouted for joy, believing that he was about to set up his kingdom on earth; but their joy was soon turned into sorrow when they heard of his death; but his enemies rejoiced, wishing he had died long before. When Abraham Lincoln was victorious, his friends rejoiced and sang praises of joy, for they believed that the government was saved and the Union restored; but their joy was soon turned into mourning as they heard the sad intelligence of his death. His enemies, however, gloated in evident satisfaction over the murderous act, and had wished it long before.

What, I ask, occurred as Christ suffered and hung dying upon the cross? Darkness covered the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour, the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. When the centurion saw what had happened, he said:—"Truly, this was a good man." What took place when Abraham Lincoln suffered and died? A sudden and deep gloom was spread over the nation, and his friends clothed them-

selves in the habiliments of mourning; the flags so lately floating in the breeze in demonstration of joy and triumph for late victories won, are suddenly draped in black.

The glorious news coming to us from Washington, announcing victory upon victory, was destined soon to be obscured by the gloom and sadness so soon following. The veil of the nation's heart is rent in twain in the removal of our good President. The heads of department and others witnessing these scene were constrained to say :—" Truly, he was a good man."

What were some of the acts of Christ during his short ministry upon earth? He caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear the lame to walk; unclean spirits to be cast out; lepers to be cleansed, and even the dead were brought to life again. What did Abraham Lincoln do during his short administration? He caused many blindly and stubbornly opposed to his policy to see, many disaffected ones to be reconciled, many possessed of the worst spirit of secession to be restored to the Union. Even many apparently dead to the cause of justice and liberty have been marvellously called to life, and are now battling nobly for the right. Christ was made an offering about the fourth year of his ministry; our late President in like manner fell a sacrifice about the fourth year of his administration. The high priests covenanted with Judas for thirty pieces of silver, to betray Christ to be crucified. What amount the arch-traitors of this rebellion agreed to pay the assassin of President Lincoln, we have not yet learned.

In considering the sense of our text, the question may be asked,—What good was secured to the human family by the death of our Saviour? We answer, according to the Scriptures, that millions of souls, fettered and chained by sin, that believed in Christ, are redeemed, and made to enjoy not only temporal, but eternal good. The benefits of a Saviour slain shall avail for millions in coming time, who believe on him, and praise and adore his name for ever.

What has resulted to the people of the United States through the death of our President? We reply, many millions of slaves, by the help of God, have had the shackles and manacles of bondage broken off, and many millions of beings, black and white, shall hereafter enjoy the benefits of freedom to his honor and glory forever, and praise God that in the sacrifice of Abraham Lincoln the slaves were set free, and the Union, as we trust, permanently restored. If we should inquire of the enemies of Lincoln, what sin or unjust act he had done during his administration against his country or the nation, they could hardly point to a single one, as the Saviour said to the Jews, John VIII., 46.

Yet I do not wish to imply that Abraham Lincoln was immaculate, or that he needed no Saviour;—far from it. This is admitted in the fact that he deemed it proper and necessary that days for national fasting, humiliation and prayer be set apart for observance by the people.

Since his death certain censorious, self-righteous persons have rashly criticised the motives of his being in the theatre on the occasion of his assassination, and would have no other evidence to prove the bad character of the man. It was also said of our Saviour, that he was not of God, because he associated with publicans and sinners. We affirm that a *man* is ever a man in every situation of life; so a Christian, as such, placed in any condition, exercises a Christian influence in every place and under all circumstances. Place of itself does not sanctify or unsanctify a man, provided he wills no wrong, or indulges in no sin; or else the wicked in attendance on public worship in the House of God would be Saints. The motives always give color to the act. Why, in the Providence of God, he was permitted to lose his life in the theatre at Washington in the presence of so many people, is alone known to the searcher of hearts, who always employs such means and instrumentalities to win wayward souls as suits him.

We do assert, without fear of contradiction, that never in the history of our Government was the loss of any man so deeply deplored and generally lamented as that of our late beloved Chief Magistrate. His qualities of mind and heart had latterly so endeared themselves to many of his friends, that their admiration of them amounted almost to adoration, evidencing almost an idolizing passion for his character. When, on the contrary, we contemplate the change so suddenly made, the friends and admirers of the President, hearing of his sad death, put on the weeds of mourning, and in the grief and sorrow of their hearts inquired of God: Why hast thou permitted us to be thus bereft of our good President by murderous hands, inasmuch as he had just triumphed over his enemies, and, as was supposed, was about to restore to us the Union, and to ratify peace. But he is gone. Lord, what can be thy object in permitting this calamity? Many such and similar prayers have been offered before God, not by single individuals only, but, as it were by millions of people.

In conclusion I would again say, in the language of our text: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that the President should die,—the slaves be set free, man be brought to worship the *Lord*,—the Union restored; than that he should live, and slavery still exist, and the Union be divided, and the nation unhappy.

Finally, I implore Thee, our Heavenly Father, who beholdest the many hearts made sad by the removal of our lamented President, that thou suffer us not to mourn as those who have no hope. Our Father, have mercy on the enemies of our Government. Graciously grant that they may no longer rebel against it. Have mercy on the vile assassin of our late President. Bless our soldiers, especially the sick and wounded. Father, I beseech Thee to endue the successor of our late President with wisdom and ability in a two-fold measure more than his predecessor during his administration. God bless the whole Cabinet.

Have mercy on the afflicted friends and relatives of the deceased. Comfort them, I pray Thee, with the consolation that he fell a victim to his enemies without cause like an innocent lamb, and that his soul now rests in Abraham's bosom. God grant that this sad dispensation may be sanctified not only to our good, but also to the temporal and eternal welfare of posterity. Amen.

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